

A MAN FOR NO SEASONS

my daughter brought home her first yo-yo today.
they're still made by duncan.
hers is red and plastic and pretty flashy.
i tried it out and it all came back quickly --
in fact, i was probably better a few hours ago
than i was forty years ago. things get easier,
when they don't matter.

the yo-yo reminded me, though, how there was
a season when yo-yos were the thing -- when
the duncan experts came and gave exhibitions
on stage at the local movie houses -- and the
most proficient kid in the neighborhood
could win a free golden championship-style model.
and how there was a different season for marbles
(aggies, steelies, et cetera), and one for tiddle-de-winks,
and one for making pocket knives stick in the ground,
and of course the obvious ones like for snowballs.

and though i eventually got pretty good at the
conventional sports -- football, basketball, softball --

i never was any good with a yo-yo or marbles or
a knife,

and my snowballs always fell apart on the way
to their targets.

i guess that's why i moved to southern california.

ARE WE SPEAKING THE SAME LANGUAGE, DEAR?

she is a talented artist
but she is also a drunk, a dooper, bisexually
promiscuous, and a castrator.
she can't figure out what it is
men want in a woman
and why they don't seem to find it in her.
she says men seem to be afraid to marry
and have families with women
who are their intellectual or artistic equals.
because she and i are friends,
and because she seems sincerely to want my opinion,
and because i've managed so far not to get involved
with her myself,
i don't want to tell her that what is turning the men off
is not her talent or intellect

but that she is a drunk, a doper, bisexually promiscuous, and a castrator. so i say, "men don't want a woman who's going to be a pain in the ass. there are enough problems in life without having a woman who's going to be a downer and a distraction."

and she says, "in other words, men are afraid of women who offer them a challenge."

TOUCHE

"oh yes," my wife tells the parents of our daughter's schoolfriend, "gerry forgot to tell me how reuben, reuben ended, and i let our daughter watch, and of course she was devastated when the dog accidentally hanged tom conti:

"how could she have?" they grimace; "that slimy character deserved worse than he got. he was a drunk, a lecher, a slob, a liar, and a lousy poet."

"i know," my wife says, "but she identified him with her father."

A GUY I THINK I WOULD HAVE LIKED, EVEN THOUGH HE WOULDN'T HAVE LIKED ME

william hazlitt was,
by birth and choice,
always in the minority.
he was, even by my standards,
unlucky in love.
he quarreled seriously with all
his best friends: coleridge,
wordsworth, leigh hunt, even
the christlike charles lamb.
he authored an essay on,
"the pleasure of hating"
and died at the relatively
premature age of 52. his
last words were, "well,
i've had a happy life."